

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims provided herein shall replace all prior versions and listings of the pending claims:

Claims 1-20 (canceled).

21. (New) A method for operating a vehicle having a fuel cell system and at least one electric machine, the fuel cell system being powered at least in part by a combination of air and pressurized gas fuel, the method comprising:

lowering the pressure of the pressurized gas fuel in order to operate the fuel cell system and recover an amount of potential energy from the pressurized gas fuel in the form of a mechanical driving force for the at least one electric machine; and

applying at least a portion of the driving force directly to the at least one electric machine to generate electrical power.

22. (New) The method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of using at least a portion of the generated electrical power to raise the pressure of the air in order to operate the fuel cell system.

23. (New) The method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of using at least a portion of the generated electrical power to power one or more vehicle electrical loads.

24. (New) The method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of storing at least a portion of the generated electrical power.